

BHASVIC's Equality and Diversity Scheme

1.0 The Legal Requirement

A summary of what the College is obliged to provide is given at Appendix A in the **Equality and Diversity Scheme: Overview** in the Annex to this paper. Broadly, the College is required to:

- Publish an equality scheme for race, disability and gender
- Take advice from people with first-hand experience of the issues relating to these matters
- Set policy
- Collect and publish relevant management information
- Monitor the impact of all its policies
- Publish an action-plan

2.0 BHASVIC's Response

Our response has been to adapt our existing College processes, where necessary, to meet the new requirements. Specifically:

- We have decided to continue to publish an action plan (the Equality and Diversity SARAP) on an annual basis rather than move to a three yearly cycle as the guidance on Equality Schemes advises.
- We have decided to combine the requirements for race, disability and gender in one scheme, rather than publish three separate ones.
- We have begun taking advice from outside groups and agencies with expertise on these issues.
- We have set up two new internal groups to assist with impact assessment and are grateful to the ESOL Department for offering to help with this also.

In addition, both the Principal and the Equality and Diversity Officer are receiving training, particularly on impact assessment which is a new process.

Annex

Equality and Diversity Scheme: Overview

Our Equality and Diversity Scheme sets out how BHASVIC intends to fulfil its duties in regard to disability, racial equality and diversity and gender equality.

The Scheme is written with two audiences in mind. Primarily, the Scheme is (with its key related documents) a working document for the College. But the Scheme is also an important statement for all members of the general public who may have an interest in the College's activities from the point of view of equality and diversity. In order to satisfy the different needs of these two different audiences, we have tried to give an accurate, up-to-date and concise summary in this Overview and signal references, where relevant, to other key related documents. Such documents are underlined in the course of the Overview and they can be made available on request, where they are not already posted on our website. Reference to the 'Scheme' means the Overview plus all key related documents.

Fulfilling our duties (see Appendix A)

The College's general duty in regard to equality and diversity is embodied in our Equality and Diversity and Race Equality policies and within our Strategic Plan. The policies contain an appendix setting out the arrangements for managing equality and diversity in the College.

- **The involvement of disabled people and diverse racial representation in our Scheme**

The following strategy has been agreed by the College's Senior Management Team. We will use our best endeavours to involve disabled people and diverse racial representation both in regard to our Scheme and in regard to its implementation. To do this, we will draw on the resources of our students, staff and parents and groups representing specific disabled and racial groups as appropriate. We are grateful for the assistance we have received from the East Sussex Disability Association in preparing our Scheme.

- **Our methods for impact assessment**

The College reviews its policies and procedures on a rolling basis and in recent years has introduced new policies and procedures to address disabled and racial equality and diversity issues. It has supported these with appropriate staff training. Three groups within the College have been set up to assist with impact assessment: The ESOL Department have agreed to help with it, in addition to which a Disability Equality Group has been constituted from interested staff and an equivalent student group has also been set up.

- **Information gathering on employment and education and how we use it**

BHASVIC gathers information which enables us to judge whether positive action is needed in regard to the welfare of staff and students with disabilities. There is a timetable for the gathering of such information and it is reported, together with conclusions about the data, in papers received by the Corporation's Human Resources Committee and its Quality and Curriculum Committee.

- **Action-planning**

The management of equality and diversity and racial issues is subject to the College's quality assurance arrangements. A Self-Assessment Report and Action Plan (SARAP) is produced

every year. The College intends to maintain its equality and diversity action-planning on a one-year rather than a three-year basis.

- **Reporting**

The College produces an Annual Report for its Corporation on Equality and Diversity. This, together with the other key documents referred to in this Overview are published on the College's intranet and website and are available as hard copies to members of the general public upon request. There is generally a small administration charge for this service.

Appendix A

Disability: The General Duty

The duty requires that every public authority shall in carrying out its functions have due regard to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

Disability: The Specific Duty

The specific duty regulations require authorities to produce and publish a Disability Equality Scheme, to implement certain aspects of the Scheme and to report on it. The Scheme may be included in another document or plan. The regulations state that:

- a public authority should publish a Disability Equality Scheme demonstrating how it intends to fulfil its general and specific duties
- a public authority should involve disabled people in the development of the Scheme
- the Scheme should include a statement of:
 - the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Scheme
 - the authority's methods for impact assessment
 - steps which the authority will take towards fulfilling its general duty (the 'action plan')
 - the authority's arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, and, where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions
 - the authority's arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular in reviewing the effectiveness of its action plan and in preparing subsequent Disability Equality Schemes
- a public authority must, within three years of the Scheme being published, take the steps set out in its action plan (unless it is unreasonable or impracticable for it to do so) and put into effect the arrangements for gathering and making use of information.
- a public authority must publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of its information gathering and the use to which it has put the information.

Race: The General Duty

The general duty requires all public authorities to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups
- promote good relations between persons of different racial groups

Race: The Specific Duty

All public authorities bound by the employment duty must monitor, by racial group, the numbers of:

- staff in post
- applicants for employment, training and promotion

Where an authority has 150 or more full-time staff, they should also monitor the number of staff from each racial group who:

- receive training
- benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance assessment procedures
- are involved in grievance procedures
- are the subject of disciplinary procedures
- cease employment

Authorities are also required to publish the results of this monitoring annually.

Further and higher education institutions are required to:

- Prepare a written statement of their policy for promoting race equality
- Have in place arrangements for fulfilling, as soon as is reasonably practicable, their duties regarding policy impact assessment and monitoring (below)
- Maintain a copy of the statement
- Fulfil those duties in accordance with such arrangements
- Assess the impact of their policies, including their race equality policy, on students and staff of different racial groups including, in particular, the impact on attainment levels of such pupils
- Monitor, by reference to those racial groups, the admission and progress of students and the recruitment and career progress of staff
- Include in their written statement an indication of their arrangements for publishing that statement and the results of their assessment and monitoring
- Take such steps as are reasonably practicable to publish annually the results of their monitoring under this article

Gender

In order to meet the Gender Equality Duty, public bodies should:

- Gather information on how their work affects women and men
- Consult employees, service users, trade unions and other stakeholders
- Assess the different impact of policies and practices on both sexes
- Identify priorities and set gender equality objectives
- Plan and take action to achieve those objectives
- Publish a gender equality scheme and review progress every three years

Document History: Approved by the Corporation 2003 Approved by the Corporation March 2007
